

Chapter 1

Outdoor Recreation Issues and Recommended Actions

This chapter presents the top eight outdoor recreation issues in Nevada and 59 actions recommended to address these issues. One hundred thirty-two participants in a modified Delphi technique identified, ranked, and weighted the top outdoor recreation issues and recommended actions in Nevada.

| Ranked and Weighted Issues (Abbreviated) | Weighted Score |
|--|-------------------|
| <i>Issue # 1: Public Access to Public Lands for Diverse Outdoor Recreation</i> | 2,135 |
| <i>Issue # 2: Funding Parks and Recreation</i> | 1,834 |
| <i>Issue # 3: Recreational Trails and Pathways</i> | 1,287 |
| <i>Issue # 4: Balancing the Protection of Nevada's Natural, Cultural, and Scenic Resources with Users</i> | 1,087 |
| <i>Issue # 5: Protecting Water Resources as Vital Components of Nevada's Recreational Base</i> | 758 |
| <i>Issue # 6: Interpretation and Education of Outdoor Recreation Opportunities</i> | 635 |
| <i>Issue # 7: Nevada's Growing Population Places Increasing Demand on Outdoor Recreation Resources and Suppliers</i> | 547 |
| <i>Issue # 8: Coordination and Cooperation Between Recreation Providers</i> | 540 |

Introduction

Both the issues and actions presented in this chapter were developed using a modified Delphi technique. The Delphi Technique is typically a "panel" of 8-12 experts selected to participate in the process because of their knowledge of a problem or issue. Panel members are asked to address the issue(s), preferably by mail. Comments are combined and

sent back out to the panel members.

This process is continued until none of the panel members want to change their input any more. (Institute for Participatory Management and Planning 1995).

Modifications to the Delphi Technique used to determine the issues and actions for this plan are as follows. The parks and recreation program manager,

Planning and Development Section, Nevada Division of State Parks (NDSP) compiled a list of potential participants by asking other professionals for recommendations for participants, searching the Internet for potential participants, and reviewing published lists of entities. Participants were selected from representatives of federal agencies, state agencies, local parks and recreation departments throughout Nevada, environmental groups, non-profit entities, user groups, and commercial outdoor recreation providers. Representatives were selected from 16 of the 17 counties in Nevada. Esmeralda County was the only county not represented.

The initial list was comprised of 300 names. The parks and recreation program manager, with assistance from the chief of planning and development, NDSP, reduced the list to 216 individuals. The objective of the reduction was to get 100 persons who would participate in the process. The assumption was that 50% of those offered the opportunity to participate would accept the offer; therefore, a minimum of 200 would have to receive the offer. A letter was sent to 216 individuals asking them if they would participate in the issues and actions identification and ranking process. Allowance was made for non-deliverables due to incorrect addresses. Of the 216 letters mailed, 213 were deliverable, leaving a 98.6% deliverable rate.

Of the 213 who received the first survey, 145, or 68 %, responded. Of the 145 who responded, 132, or 62% agreed to participate and 13, or 6%, declined. The 132 who agreed to participate were

mailed six different surveys, with the first mailing serving as the first of the six surveys. The first three surveys (DeLoney 2001) dealt with the issues identification and ranking and the last three surveys with the actions identification and ranking. Details and results of each survey are presented in Appendix A, Planning and Research Methods.

Respondents to the first issues survey identified 228 outdoor recreation issues. A panel was convened by the Nevada Division of State Parks to reduce the number of issues by combining similar ones, and to group the issues into the 12 general categories. The panel reduced the list of 228 issues to 185 and grouped them into the 12 general categories. Issues were grouped under the 12 general categories to make it easier for participants in the process to respond to the second issues survey.

In the second issues survey, participants were asked to select, rank, and weight five of the 185 issues listed in the survey. Weighted scores from the second issues survey were aggregated to determine the top eight issues from the 12 general categories, and then to select an issue statement to depict that issue for presentation in this plan.

The third survey in the issues identification and ranking process asked the participants to write a brief description of the eight issues from their perspective. Eighty-two of the participants, or 62%, completed and returned the open-ended questionnaire. These descriptions are the information source for the presentation of each issue in this plan. Quotes by the participants

are used in the following pages to describe the issues.

Even though participants were asked to provide descriptions of each of the eight issues in the third and final round of the issues process, many comments are actually recommendations. In some instances, quotes by the participants include the participant's recommendations to present their description of the issue in the proper context. In a purist sense, it would have been more consistent with the planning process to present only the recommended actions shown in tables 1.1-1.8 since these actions were determined via a structured planning process. We opted for the approach cited to draw on the participant's contributions to develop this plan.

Participants in the public input process determined the actions recommended to address the issues presented in this chapter (DeLoney 2002). Participants identified, prioritized, and weighted the actions. The Nevada Division of State Parks staff did not alter the meaning of the actions determined by the participants. Minor editing was done to begin each recommended action with an action verb if possible without changing the participant's meaning. Participants in the public input process suggested numerous other excellent actions, but they were eliminated in the prioritization process.

Although the Nevada Division of State Parks staff developed and implemented the process to produce the issues and actions for this plan, the 132 participants in the process described above determined the issues and actions. Therefore, the issues and actions do not

necessarily represent the views of the Nevada Division of State Parks.

Issue # 1: Public Access to Public Lands for Diverse Outdoor Recreation

Issue Statement: There is a growing need to protect, maintain, and increase public access to public lands for the greatest diversity of outdoor recreational users.

Public access to public lands for diverse outdoor recreation, the fifth ranked issue in the 1992 SCORP, rose to a strong first place ranking in the **2003 SCORP**. Of the eight outdoor recreation issues presented in this plan, respondents seemed more concerned about this issue than any of the other seven issues.

The majority of the respondents to the issues survey view the expansive federal lands in Nevada as valuable outdoor recreation resources. Some view the development of outdoor recreation opportunities on federal lands as a means for economic growth. The overriding concern of the respondents is to keep federal lands open to a wide variety of outdoor recreation activities while protecting the natural resources.

Of the 70,275,800 land acres in Nevada, the federal government owns 61,548,000 acres, or 87.6%. As a percentage of the total land acres in federal ownership, Nevada ranks first of the 50 states. Utah ranks second in this category with almost 68% of its total lands in federal ownership.

In total land acres under federal ownership, Nevada ranks second only to Alaska, with 61,548,000 acres compared to 244,626,700 land acres in Alaska. Federal agencies administer more lands in Nevada than in any other state except Alaska. The BLM administers 47,966,200 acres of land in Nevada, or 68% of the total land acreage. (National Wilderness Institute 1995). Details on land ownership in Nevada are presented in Chapter 2, Outdoor Recreation Resources and Providers.

Nevadans certainly understand the necessity of balancing recreational use with natural resource conservation. Their understanding of the “**balance**” needed to address public access to public lands should improve the opportunities to implement the actions recommended to address the issue listed in table 1.1.

- “Protect and use at the same time. Use but not abuse.” (Member, Southern Nevada Land Cruisers).

While respondent’s views about public access to public lands varied, consistent themes emerged in the comments received. Threats to public access to public lands occur in urban and rural areas. Causes of these threats in urban and rural areas are similar.

Development was one of the most often cited threats to public access.

- “Access can be denied as early as the plan approval state—typically a central government such as a county. Probably an oversight by staff that fails to see from proposed developers plans. Local government (towns, GID) need review authority and need to require access be planned in!”

(General Manager, General Improvement District).

Threats to public access particularly abound in the urban interfaces as the population increases.

- “Gateways or entrances to public lands should not be sold to private parties, thus cutting off an historic access to public lands. If this happens, an agreement should be made, whereby an alternative access is provided based on public input, federal land holder, and private party.” (Trails Coordinator, County Government).

Population increases and corresponding increases in outdoor recreation activities are cited as one of the causes of the threat to public access to public lands.

- “Public demand for access to public lands is over running all land agencies planning or capability to manage. Land managers thus are in a reaction mode instead of a pro-active mode. Resources are being destroyed where public access management plans are not in place.” (Member, Southwest Gas Trailhikers).

Changing management practices of private property ownership is seen as one reason for the reduction of public access to public lands.

- “Some access to public lands is limited by private property land holdings that encompass the surroundings.” (Officer, Nevada Division of Wildlife).

Ways to gain **access to public lands through private property** do not have to include the purchase of private property.

- “First, there is a need to gain access through private holdings to many places on public lands. There are several approaches like gaining easements, special permissions, trade offs like road improvement and facilities in exchange for access, educational activities to encourage recreationists not to damage private property, etc. Purchase of private land for access needs to be discouraged. There is too much public land in Nevada already and acquisitions reduce the tax base and productive output.” (Member, Joint RAC NCA Subgroup).

Open lands! Nevada has plenty of them. **Keeping open lands accessible** is the problem.

- “Nevada has enormous open land. It is a treasure and a responsibility. Recreation in nature gives us basic values of respect and caring for nature. This experience should be open to all, while protecting our state’s treasure. These experiences can grow generations that are awake and engaged citizens.” (Director, Tennis and Ski Resort).

Recreational users need to be respectful of private property and the public lands.

- “We need to maintain and increase access to public lands; however, we also need to be very respectful and considerate of crossing privately

owned land to get to public lands.” (Private Citizen, Sparks).

What may be described as “**environmental activism**” captures some respondent’s views on the issue.

- “Responsible use is certainly possible; however, pressures from well-funded, national “environmental” groups may bypass any opportunity for that responsible use. Wilderness and monument designations may not be in Nevada’s best recreational interest.” (Entrepreneur, Zephyr Cove).

Others see a pressing need to **protect the resources** as access and use increases.

- “We need to find ways to identify and protect many scenic and recreational resources before development or misuse destroys them. Efforts must be taken to identify areas that can absorb intense recreational use and educate the public where these resources are available and how they can be maintained.” (Director, County PARD).

No more closures! Certain respondents do not want any more public lands closed to the various sectors of the public.

- “Public access is being limited or denied to certain users of public land. Roads are closed and areas are closed for wilderness; other roads are limited to street legal vehicles only, denying use by OHV’s. All users should be able to hike, ride or drive on public lands while still protecting

the natural resources. Public lands belong to all Americans, not just the Sierra Club.” (Private Citizen, Elko).

Respondents offered views on **various aspects** of the **issue statement**.

- “The “growing need” reflects demographic population growth and reduction of open space nationwide. Nevada has the most public lands of any state other than Alaska, so Nevada should responsibly protect its public lands. “Greatest diversity” means a public representing America in race and ethnic diversity, and should only be limited by excluding uses that degrade or damage, rather than protect, public lands.” (Superintendent, National Park).

Government agencies responsible for public lands need to **improve agency management** of these lands.

- “Although the majority of Nevada is federal land open to the public, it is largely unknown to the majority of the population and essentially unmanaged. In some areas this leads to uncontrolled impacts, conflicts between user groups, and conflicts between land managers and user groups. This needs to be better managed and developed so that a wide diversity of lands (mountains, deserts, urban fringe and rural) can be made available to all user groups.” (Member, Nevada Bicycle Advisory Board).

Increased state control of public lands could insure access and be more responsive to local needs than Washington, D.C.

- “Increased state control is needed to insure access whenever possible. The state is more responsive to local needs than is Washington, D.C. The 19th century land distribution/control strategy is no longer viable.” (Manager, Nevada Division of State Parks).

Funding is needed to insure continued public access to public lands.

- “Unless financial support from outside of Lincoln County is forthcoming, or unless the State provides these services, it is highly unlikely that Lincoln County can increase existing programs.” (Director, Community Development, City Government).

Access to public lands needs to be **designed without barriers** to those whose mobility has been impaired.

- “Access without barriers is important. Trailheads often have bollards, gates, etc. to keep motor vehicles out and prevent wheelchair users from getting in.” (Employee, Beneficial Design).

Actions to Address Issue # 1

Actions 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 presented in table 1.1 offer an excellent formula for actions to address the public access to public lands for diverse outdoor recreation issue. The number 1 rated action includes the recommendation to “Identify lands that should be

maintained for public use...” The top two rated actions recommend the acquisition of lands to provide access to public lands. Providing public access to public lands need not require acquisitions of large tracts of land, nor do acquisitions by the “appropriate land agencies’ have to result in net gains in Nevada of land owned by government agencies. Developers need to provide for and maintain existing and future access and easements to public lands (table 1.1, action # 2).

Action # 4 brings in the idea “to prevent further restrictive land designations, such as wilderness, national monument, and national conservation areas.” Actions # 5, 6, and 7 stress the development of plans to address growing needs, and the enforcement of existing laws that protect public access to public lands. Action # 8 encourages stronger partnerships between government agencies and property owners.

The third ranked action sparked the most controversy. Originally, this action proposed the transfer of *all* Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands to the State of Nevada. A few participants in the process wanted this action thrown out. This proposed action was in part based on the premise by some people that the legal existence and authority of the BLM has substantially less force than that of the U.S. Forest Service (USFS). They also contend that the BLM jurisdiction is constitutionally questionable.

An officer of the Duck Valley Shoshone-Paiute Tribes, for example, voiced strong opposition against the transfer of BLM lands to the State of Nevada. He summarized his opposition this way.

“Therefore, let me express here in the strongest terms possible the opposition of the Shoshone-Paiute Tribes to any proposal (that) would transfer land from the BLM or any other federal agency to the State of Nevada. For these and a host of other reasons we cannot support your project at this time.” (Meisinger 2002).

Given the comments cited above by the participants in this public input process, it is doubtful that enough public support exists among the residents in Nevada to convince the Nevada Congressional delegation to sponsor a proposal to turn *all* BLM lands in Nevada over to the State in perpetuity. Convincing the U. S. Congress to pass the legislation would be an even bigger, if not impossible, challenge. However, it is quite feasible for some federal lands to be turned over to state and local governments, and even private parties. The Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act (SNPLMA) offers a model for such a process. Efforts by Nevada’s congressional delegation are currently underway to implement legislation similar to Clark County’s SNPLMA that will apply to other areas of the state such as Lincoln and White Pine Counties. In any case, public processes conducted by public agencies should be inclusive of all publics and every effort should be taken to negotiate actions to address the expressed range of concerns or needs.

Table 1.1
**Actions to Address Issue # 1: Public Access to Public
Lands for Diverse Outdoor Recreation**

| Rank | Action |
|-------------|--|
| 1 | Identify lands that should be maintained for public use and develop a process to prioritize acquisition of these lands (similar to the Southern Nevada Public Lands Management Act but for the whole state). |
| 2 | Limit public land acquisitions to the minimal property interests required to insure and preserve public access to public lands and recreational resources. Developers developing lands need to provide for and maintain existing and future access and easements to public lands. |
| 3 | Approach the Nevada Congressional delegation with the proposal that they sponsor legislation turning specified BLM lands in Nevada over to the State in perpetuity for outdoor recreation purposes at no cost to the State. |
| 4 | Prevent further land designations, such as wilderness, national monument, and national conservation areas, which restrict certain types of outdoor recreation use and economic opportunities. |
| 5 | Provide funding for communities to develop regional recreation plans to identify existing trails and future systems/access/maintenance etc. |
| 6 | Develop master plans to address growing needs—identify existing resources and distribute and promote their utilization. Enforce existing laws which protect public access to public lands. |
| 7 | Develop a report internally or through consultants that identifies key areas for protection (important habitat, trails/trailheads, scenic areas, etc.), maintenance and public access—a baseline report on what exists, what is needed. |
| 8 | Provide stronger partnerships between government agencies and property owners to insure litter control, reduction of vandalism, and restrict use of 4-wheelers to existing roads to help encourage property owners to provide continued and new access to public lands adjacent to private property. |

Source: James A. DeLoney, *Nevada's Outdoor Recreation Actions Survey*. (unpublished research), Planning and Development Section, Nevada Division of State Parks, 2002)

Issue # 2: Funding Parks and Recreation

Issue Statement: Existing levels of outdoor recreation funding are inadequate to meet the recreation needs of Nevada.

Funding, the perennial top ranked issue, slipped from a tie for first place in the 1992 SCORP to a strong second place in this plan. Respondents to the issues identification and ranking surveys paint a vivid picture of the situation surrounding outdoor recreation funding in Nevada. This public input was used to construct the following analysis.

As participants have noted, the maintenance of outdoor recreation areas and facilities at the federal, state, and local levels in Nevada has not kept pace with demands created by the rapid increases in population in Nevada and the increasing number of out-of-state visitors. Federal agencies report that improvements need to be made in the management of public lands in Nevada entrusted to them for multiple-use by all the public they serve. Public comments perceive a trend by the federal agencies to close more and more public lands to various outdoor recreation activities, such as off-road vehicling, and to various economic activities.

State land agencies fare no better than federal agencies in the political arena. The backlog of development and maintenance projects cited by the Nevada State Parks is just as alarming. Some Nevadans are reluctant to pay higher taxes or recreation fees to support Nevada State Parks because of the extensive federal lands open to the

public. Without public support from the voters, state legislators allocate scarce tax dollars to higher priorities such as educational, medical, and law-enforcement services (Francke 2000).

Local recreation entities in rapidly growing counties, particularly Clark County (Las Vegas area), cannot keep up with the population increases and corresponding increases in outdoor recreational activities. Clark County is racing to stay ahead of the population surges to provide vital services such as electricity, water, schools, and transportation. Securing adequate outdoor recreation funding in this environment is difficult. Urban development is consuming limited natural resources suitable for outdoor recreation. Recreationists and developers place enormous pressure on existing outdoor recreation resources and facilities.

According to one respondent to the 2001 issues survey (DeLoney 2001), "Funding inadequacies are particularly critical in rural areas of the state." The 2000-2003 economic downturn saw a dramatic stock market decline—the Dow Jones Industrial Average dropped 38%, the S&P 500 lost 49%, and the NASDAQ lost nearly 80% (Today's Seniors. February 17, 2003). Four sparsely populated rural counties in Nevada (Esmeralda, Lander, Mineral, and White Pine) experienced population declines from 1990-2000 (Census Bureau, 1990 and 2000 Censuses of Population). Rural counties with declining populations and a weak economic base make it difficult to generate public revenues for outdoor recreation purposes. Nevertheless, population

masses from Clark County and other heavily populated counties in Nevada continue to travel to the rural counties to recreate because of the natural resource base in these counties. Without the means to provide the infrastructure required to support the demand for outdoor recreation and other tourism related ventures, these rural counties will continue to struggle to meet the outdoor recreation needs of local citizens and visitors to rural areas.

On the positive side of the funding issue, three developments at the statewide level are impacting the funding of outdoor recreation opportunities in Nevada.

- Economic projections released by the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) on August 26, 2003, show evidence that the U.S. economy has improved over the past 12 months and is forecasted to continue improving through 2004 (Congressional Budget Office, August 26, 2003). “The economy is firing on all cylinders,” said Sung Won Sohn, chief economist at Wells Fargo in Minneapolis (Associated Press, September 27, 2003). Short-term interest rates set by the Federal Reserve remain at 1%, a 45-year low (Aversa, October 28, 2003). During the last 12 years, inflation rates ranged from 1.6% to 3.4%, with 11 of the 12 years seeing inflation rates at 3% or lower. Inflation for 2003 is projected to be a modest 2.1% (Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, 2003). A growing economy is more likely to generate additional tax revenues that may become available to fund public projects, such as public parks and recreation areas.

- The Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act of 1998, or SNPLMA (Public Law 105-263) (Bureau of Land Management 2003), has generated over \$210 million to improve outdoor recreation opportunities in Nevada. Funds are generated by the sale of federal lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management in Clark County. As these land sales continue, additional funds will become available to support outdoor recreation in Nevada.
- Voters in Nevada approved a \$200 million bond issue (Question 1) in November 2002. The purpose of the bond issue is for conservation and resource protection, such as protecting water resources and quality, and restoring and improving parks, recreational areas, and historic and cultural resources (Wilcox 2003).

The passage of the bond issue is the most powerful, effective action Nevadans have taken to support outdoor recreation and the environment. The six issues and actions surveys used to obtain information to develop this chapter were all completed in 2001 and 2002 before the citizens in Nevada voted on the \$200 million bond issue in November 2002. The National Park Service (McCusker 2003) questions whether or not the participants would have had the same feelings about funding if the process were repeated after the passage of the \$200 million bond issue.

On-going BLM land sales made possible by the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act will continue to have major impacts on the provision of outdoor recreation opportunities in

Nevada. Details of the SNPLMA and the bond issue are presented in Chapter 5 of this plan.

One theme dominated the comments submitted to describe the funding issue—all levels of government—federal, state, and local—face funding problems. Dominant themes characterizing the funding issue emerging from the participant's comments are presented under the following headings. As in issue # 1, quotes are the means to present and describe the themes.

One participant summed the **funding dilemma** up rather succinctly.

- “Well, there’s never enough money for anything, is there?” (Member, BlueRibbon Coalition).

A more appropriate question may be how much money are the governmental entities actually receiving and what can they accomplish with the funding levels appropriated by elected officials? Governmental employees responding to the 2001 issues survey were more apt than non-governmental respondents to view funding shortages for governmental entities as a cause of poor maintenance and a lack of outdoor recreation opportunities on public lands.

Another participant presented an interesting correlation between **perceptions of inadequate funding** and recreation opportunities.

- “The perception of inadequate recreation funding drives the perception that there is a lack of recreation opportunities.”

(Coordinator, Nevada Department of Transportation).

Conducting definitive empirical research in Nevada could identify importance variables in the provision of outdoor recreation. A study of state park visitors in Texas showed that public perceptions differed from the facts (Kim et al. 1996). A commonly held perception at that time viewed park fees and travel costs as factors limiting park visitation. The 1996 study of state park visitors revealed that cost was not the primary reason why people would not visit state parks more often in the future.

In the Texas study, 81% of the visitors to Texas State Parks cited the ‘lack of time’ as the factor which would ‘definitely’ or ‘probably’ reduce the number of future visits to state parks. When these same visitors were asked which factors would ‘definitely not’ or ‘probably not’ reduce the number of future visits to Texas State Parks, 75% cited ‘the cost of traveling to state parks being too high’ and 62% cited ‘cost of admission is too high.’ Thus, travel costs and park admission fees were not the limiting factors for the majority of park visitors. With both spouses working in many families today, and others holding down multiple jobs, it is easy to see why families do not have the time to visit public parks more often.

Conditions on the public lands administered by the federal agencies in Nevada are a major concern with some federal employees. This concern begins with the **level of funding provided the federal agencies in Nevada** by the U.S. Congress.

- “Present levels of recreation funds from Washington, D.C., to the BLM and USFS are not even sufficient to manage staffing let alone develop recreation sites. Outdoor recreation in the federal agencies needs to be funded for future recreation project development, management, and staffing to complete the planning and NEPA requirements.” (Specialist, BLM).

Land management agencies in Nevada face many **funding related challenges**.

- “Only by funding more outdoor recreation activities can we hope to gain our access back and to keep what little we have left. Outdoor recreation is part of the future of Nevada and should be recognized as such.” (Citizen, Austin).

Funding affects the provision of **outdoor recreation opportunities and maintenance** of existing facilities.

- “If more money was available, more education, publicity, and recreational uses could be developed, which could protect sensitive lands and accommodate the outdoor enthusiast.” (Rural Towns Manager).

Respondents saw a **need to prioritize funding** needs and costs.

- “What do Nevadans want in outdoor recreation? We cannot answer the funding questions until we know what is wanted. Some may want nice camping grounds, others may want only access for primitive camping. Hunters and OHV recreationists want little; families

and older Nevadans may want and need more facilities. Who wants to go where? We must understand that first.” (Member, Dunes and Trails ATV Club).

Participants stated that the **funding** needed to **operate and maintain existing outdoor recreation areas and facilities** should be a **priority**.

- “I think the most challenging funding aspect is the difficulty in obtaining operating and maintenance funding, versus capital or acquisition funding—though neither of those is easy either. I see that staffing levels are too low to adequately serve the outdoor recreation needs of Nevadans, and that many facilities have fallen into disrepair. The proposed 2002 statewide bond (passed) addresses capital projects and acquisition, but will not cover the O&M costs of those projects. I worry most about state parks and local government facilities in rural areas. The legislature needs to recognize the importance of providing quality recreational experiences for both residents and visitors.” (Member, Nevada Land Conservancy).

Funding outdoor recreation opportunities are **particularly acute in rural areas** according to the comments presented below.

- “Funding inadequacies are particularly critical in rural areas of the State. Funding alternatives, such as park impact fees, work well in metropolitan areas characterized by accelerated rates for growth. However, they are not practical in

the rural communities since the slow pace of growth cannot generate enough revenue within prescribed time frames to finance a project.” (Planner, Municipal PARD).

The **rapid population increases** Nevada experienced in recent years contributed to the funding shortfalls.

- “State and Federal funding have not been keeping up with population growth and recreational demands. More funding sources like SNPLMA need to be identified on a statewide basis, then maybe in ten years we'll catch up with demand.” (Member, Southwest Gas Trailhikers).

The **need to market outdoor recreation opportunities** to Nevadans and out-of-state visitors surfaced.

- “We need to market our recreation opportunities to both residents and out-of-state residents. We need to support local convention and visitor authorities who market and promote recreation opportunities. We also need to support the Nevada Commission on Tourism's New Adventure Campaign. We need to establish a new funding source to promote motorized recreation. We should model ourselves after the "Green Sticker" program that has been successfully established by the California Off Highway Vehicle Commission. I would be glad to help lead a statewide effort to promote this new funding source for Nevada.” (Executive Director, Convention and Visitors Authority).

A significant number of respondents addressed **potential sources of revenues** to address the funding shortfalls.

- “An agency that is dependent upon park bonds for maintenance and development is under funded since these costs should be coming up under general appropriations. To meet public demand and compensate for the public lands, which will inevitably be lost over time, the park needs a substantial general fund increase or a percentage of the Tourism Budget or a dedicated tax. Highway funds might be used for the main roads going into parks. State and local parks should work together to convene blue ribbon committees to discuss the future funding of parks. Everyone likes parks but there appears to be no primary constituency supporting them. Because of the extensive lobbying conducted for other state funded programs, it is unlikely that parks will ever receive the money it needs without its own support groups. Parks need outside groups and more legislative support to focus on park facilities and services. Parks may also benefit from a private nonprofit support group to obtain larger grants and donations.” (Member, Lahontan Wetlands Coalition).

To adequately address the funding required to meet the outdoor recreation needs of Nevadans and its visitors necessitates **actions by the Nevada State Legislature**. Participants offered assessments and suggestions about the Nevada State Legislature. These comments are presented as quotes below.

- “The legislature needs to be convinced to allocate more funds. Probably the casino industry needs to ante up a greater proportion to support the state in which they do business.” (Member, BlueRibbon Coalition).

Actions to Address Issue # 2

The top ranked action recommended to deal with the funding issue (table 1.2) received the highest weighted score of the 573 actions scored by the 132 participants to address the eight outdoor recreation issues presented in this plan. The top four actions recommended to tackle funding needs focused on ways that the state legislature, the recreation industry, and the recreation user can generate additional revenues. The state legislature can only increase revenues for outdoor recreation purposes by raising current tax rates or by dedicating existing taxes for outdoor recreation purposes.

Actions ranked one through four overlap. Further measures are needed to refine these recommendations. The fifth ranked action recommended addresses the reality of funding predicaments given current economic conditions. Keeping projects and facilities at a minimal level to keep expenses down is necessary to properly distribute available tax dollars.

Actions 4 mentions the registration of recreational vehicles as a means to generate revenues to provide outdoor recreation opportunities. Legislation proposed in the 2003 legislative session to begin a registration program in Nevada did not pass, but will likely be reintroduced in the next session in

accordance with an interim legislative study. Registration programs enacted by states other than California could be carefully assessed for ideas on how Nevada could structure a proposed registration program. If the proposal is to have the public support it needs to improve outdoor recreation opportunities in Nevada, revenues generated above the cost to implement the program must be dedicated to provide opportunities for those incurring costs to fund the program. The dilemma is that dedicated taxes reduce the flexibility state legislators prefer to have to appropriate tax revenues while taxpayers are more supportive of special taxes if the taxes are dedicated to provide the opportunities recreationists need to participate in their preferred outdoor recreation activity.

Those who benefit from public services or benefits such as outdoor recreation opportunities are expected to incur the larger share of the cost to provide those opportunities, especially the operation and maintenance costs. Only revenues from the general treasury can realistically meet major costs such as park acquisitions, facility development, and significant renovations at public parks and recreation areas.

Most public parks and recreation areas are not mandated to recover the costs to deliver the services provided to the public. Historically, citizens support using general tax revenues for the provision of public outdoor recreation opportunities. Tax rates must be reasonable to receive public support. To determine what the public is willing to pay in taxes or fees, conduct sound empirical research to accurately determine what outdoor recreation

opportunities the public wants governmental entities to provide and how they intend to pay for these opportunities. If the public is not willing

to pay for outdoor recreational services, governmental entities have to reduce the services provided.

| <p style="text-align: center;">Table 1.2 Actions to Address Issue # 2: Funding Parks and Recreation</p> | |
|--|--|
| Rank | Action |
| 1 | Propose several funding mechanisms to the governor and legislature along with statistics on population, surveys, etc. |
| 2 | Develop a funding program to address the need for additional financial support for outdoor recreation. Make recommendations to the Nevada State Legislature for long-term funding program. |
| 3 | Introduce a legislative bill (recreational tax or gas tax) to increase budgets for all agencies involved in outdoor recreation, from the local to state levels. Encourage congress to increase outdoor recreation funding for federal agencies in Nevada that provide outdoor recreation opportunities. |
| 4 | Address the issue within government and fund the needs as required. This may require user fees, registration of off-road vehicles, increases of existing registration fees, or new taxes. Nevada can no longer try and fund new programs from existing tax revenues. We will need to increase these revenues to give the public what they demand and want. |
| 5 | Keep projects and facilities at a minimal level to keep development, maintenance, and operational expenses down to a level citizens can afford. Keep things simple! |

Source: James A. DeLoney, *Nevada's Outdoor Recreation Actions Survey* (unpublished research), Planning and Development Section, Nevada Division of State Parks, 2002.

Issue # 3: Recreational Trails and Pathways

Issue Statement: There is a growing need to provide recreational trails and pathways throughout the state, in both urban and rural areas

The citizen's survey conducted by the Nevada Division of State Parks in 2001 (DeLoney 2001) confirms the popularity of trail activities in Nevada (figure 1.1). The most popular trail activity is walking without a dog, with 41% of those surveyed participating. When walking without and with a dog are combined, 55% of the population participates. When bicycling is combined with mountain biking, 31% participate. Twenty-nine percent of the population participates in some form of off-road motorized recreation. Trail activities may occur in conjunction with other outdoor recreation activities.

All of the participation in the above trail activities does not occur on trails. In some cases, trails are not readily available to the participants. Percents represent persons 16 years of age and older in Nevada who held a driver's license in Nevada at the time the survey was conducted. When the survey was conducted, there were 1.4 million driver's license holders in Nevada (Hurst 2000).

As with most issues in Nevada, the **population increase in Nevada** is a major factor that drives the issue.

- "Population increases are dictating the continued demand for more trails throughout the State. Trail construction costs and long term

maintenance funding coupled with obtaining the desired easements are lacking." (Manager, Nevada Division of State Parks).

One of the **greatest assets in Nevada to attract tourists to the state is the natural resource base**, most of which is federal lands available to the public. Trails compliment this expansive natural resource base.

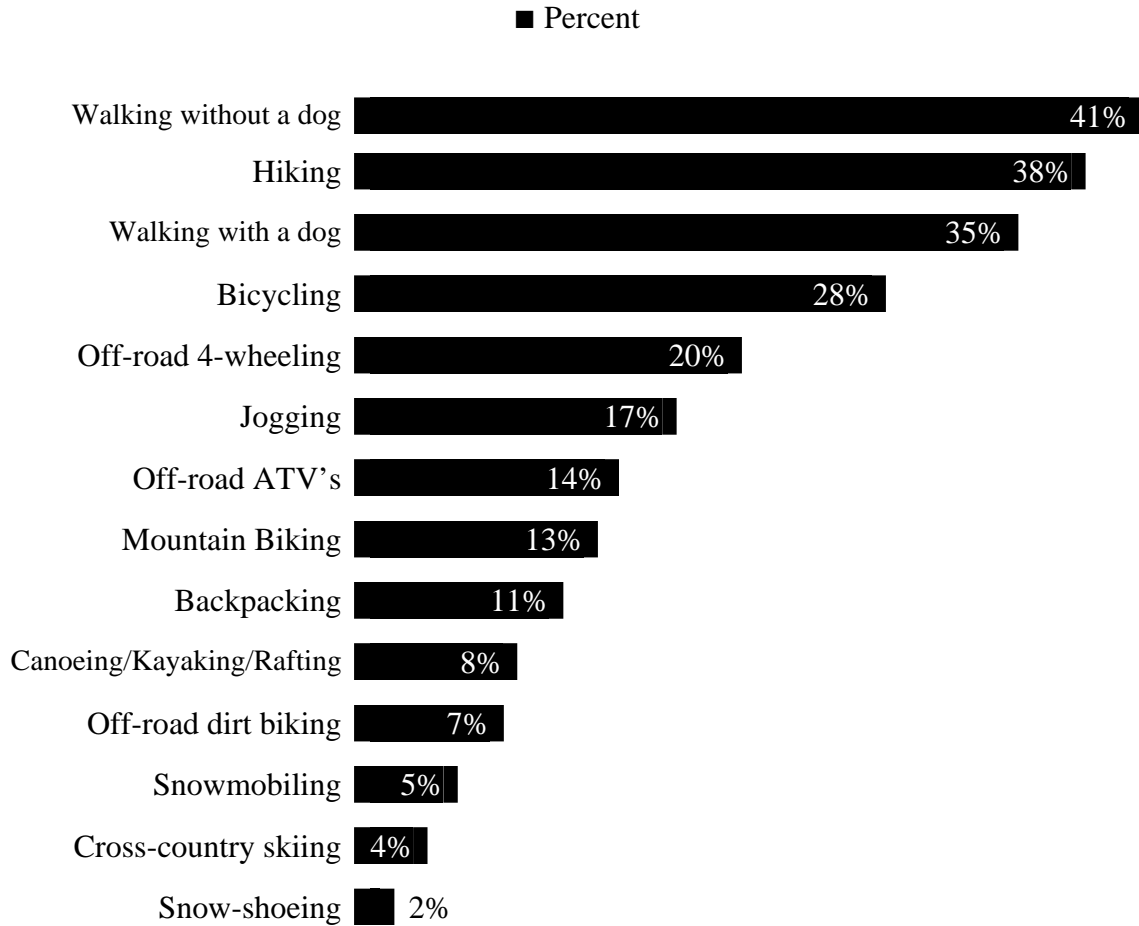
- "Nevada's great outdoors is a huge tourism market that needs to be expanded. Northeast Nevada has a strong desire to create recreational trails and walkways to meet the demands of the market that is growing." (Coordinator, City Government).

With the push in some areas to promote recreation-based tourism, there is a **need to assess the negative as well as the positive impacts**.

- "An extraordinarily high percentage of Nevada residents say they hike, walk, and/or otherwise participate in activities that require a comprehensive trails system that includes more urban, developed pathways as well as less-developed, more traditional hiking trails. With our growing population, and a push in some areas to promote recreation-based tourism, use will only increase. There is concern over increased negative impacts on existing trails; so new trails need to be provided. Linkages need to occur within and between communities, along river corridors and mountain ranges, etc. Competing uses need to be considered and provided for; hiking and mountain biking, for

example, may not be compatible in all areas.” (Member, Nevada Land Conservancy).

Figure 1.1
Percent of Nevadans Participating in Trail Activities in 2000
(Participation occurring in Nevada and other states)



Source: James A. DeLoney, *Nevadans Outdoors—A Survey on Outdoor Recreation in Nevada* (unpublished research), Planning and Development Section, Nevada Division of State Parks, February 2003.

Participants described this issue by offering comments that may be appropriately described as **trails planning**.

- “Right-of-way and trail corridors need to be identified and preserved for trail development and short- and long-term planning.” (County Trails Coordinator).

Like funding, participants cite **education** as an essential element to address the trails issue.

- “Trails can act to channel public access into a less intrusive "path" to enjoy the outdoors. Information/education is easier to provide (via trail head, key interest points, etc.). With education comes appreciation and respect.” (Manager, County Government).

Qualitative comments citing **trail needs** are consistent with the proportion of the population participating in trail activities shown in figure 1.1.

- “Recreation users are changing in rural Nevada from the traditional uses of hunting/fishing and exploring the outback. Today's users are from urban areas and they want marked trails, recreation facilities, brochures, signed roads, and site interpretation. This type of user is used to these enhancements and they expect to see more enhancements even in Nevada's isolated, rural settings.” (Specialist, BLM).

In addition to expressing the need for trails in Nevada, participants also addressed **how to provide trails**.

- “Recreational trails cost money and users need to pay a part of the development and maintenance, and the developers need to lower the quality and quantity of trails to meet the funding. Utilize volunteer help to cut back on spending.” (Member, Good Sam Club).

Participants believe that **developers and landowners are the key** to the provision of trails to meet the growing needs.

- “New developments should be required to provide trails in their planning. Access to existing trails should be required, (as well as enforcement of these requirements), and maintenance of existing trails should be determined prior to approval of any new projects. People will pay for outdoor recreation, so assessing fees for trail maintenance is not an outrageous request in home owner/association fees.” (Specialist, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service—Nevada State Office).

One of the most important aspects of trails is their connectivity. As seen by the participants, **connectivity is important** for the recreational use of trails and for the transportation needs of rapidly growing urban areas such as those in Clark County. Connectivity requires cooperation between various agencies to permit trails to cross through their jurisdictions. Address trails that connect the urban and rural areas.

- “City residents wish to have urban trails which connect parks and existing trail systems. However, funding and/or available rights-of-way are not available for construction.” (Parks Manager, City PARD).

Actions to Address Issue # 3

The seven actions listed in table 1.3 emphasize the development of a state trails plan; county trails plans, and cooperation among the various entities. The top ranked action to address the recreational trails and pathways issue is to get all the various public entities to create a master plan for the state, and update it every five years. The second ranked action recommends an inventory of existing trails and pathways. Once an inventory is developed, it should be updated periodically, such as once every five years, or continuously, such as when new data becomes available or when the trail data changes. The Nevada Division of State Parks (NDSP) began working in earnest late in the year 2001 on a process to produce Nevada’s first statewide trails inventory and Nevada’s first State Trails Plan. The NDSP’s recreational trails program manager will serve as the project manager under the direction of the park and recreation program manager to accomplish these tasks. The state trails inventory and the state trails plan are both scheduled for completion in December 2004.

Work on the state trails inventory, a component of the state trails plan, began in the fall of 2002 and is on going. In January 2003, the NDSP requested trails inventory data from the Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Forest Service.

Information collected in the process to develop Nevada’s 2003 SCORP will be used extensively in the development of Nevada’s State Trails Plan. Of particular importance is the information obtained to determine the issues and actions. Participants in the public input process did an excellent job of describing the “recreational trails and pathways” issue and recommending actions to address that issue (table 1.3). Participation data collected in the 2001 Citizen’s Survey and the 1999-2000 National Survey on Recreation and the Environment will also be very useful. Given the information and data already available on “recreational trails and pathways,” the process to develop Nevada’s State Trails Plan may focus on various aspects of implementation as well as planning.

Action # 7 in table 1.3 recommends the dissemination of information on grants available for trail development and enhancement. The Nevada Division of State Parks administers two grants programs for Nevada that offer federal funds for trail acquisition, development, and maintenance. These two programs are:

Recreational Trails Program

Federal Agency: Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)

State Agency Administering in Nevada: Nevada Division of State Parks (NDSP)

Purpose: Provide federal funds to states for the development and maintenance of trails and trail facilities.

Land & Water Conservation Fund Grants Program

Federal Agency: National Park Service (NPS)

State Agency Administering in Nevada: Nevada Division of State Parks (NDSP)

Purpose: Provide federal funds to states for the acquisition and development of parks and recreation areas, to include trails and trail-related facilities.

Information on the RecTrails and Land and Water Conservation Fund Grant Programs is available at the Nevada Division of State Parks website at <http://www.parks.nv.gov>.

In November 2002, the voters of Nevada passed Question 1 on the statewide ballot in Nevada. Ballot Question 1 was a proposal to issue bonds in the amount

of \$200 million for conservation and resource protection. The Nevada Division of State Lands is responsible for the administration of the two grant programs of the Question 1 funding allocations that will directly fund recreational trails. These two grant programs will provide

\$7,250,000 to state agencies, counties, municipalities, or qualifying private nonprofit organizations for the construction of recreational trails; and

\$5,000,000 to develop the Lake Tahoe path system (Douglas, Washoe, or Carson City Counties).

Information on the Question 1 Grant Programs administered by the Nevada Division of State Lands is available at their website at <http://www.lands.nv.gov/>.

Table 1.3
Actions to Address Issue # 3: Recreational Trails and Pathways

| Rank | Action |
|-------------|---|
| 1 | Get all the land managers at the BLM, US Forest Service, US Park Service, State Parks, counties, cities, and park leaders with the public to create a trail master plan for the State. Update the master plan every 5 years. |
| 2 | Inventory all areas for existing trails and pathways. Develop master plans for potential/future trails, bike lanes, and pathways. Implement the master plan with help and input from participating and interested user groups. We need many more miles of trails, bike lanes, and pathways in Nevada! |
| 3 | Encourage interagency cooperation to look at the regional context of trails and the connectivity of these facilities (share dollar resources/partnerships). |
| 4 | Create a statewide task force that includes county-city officials and develop plans for each county/city—utilize those plans to take to the state for additional funds for grants. |
| 5 | Define a current and future trails system. Then systematically help them happen so that they link together—biking, hiking, horseback, and OHV. |
| 6 | Do it! Cooperate with feds and get volunteers to create/maintain trails. |
| 7 | Disseminate more information on grant moneys available for trail development and enhancement to agencies so they can take advantage of these funds. Establish a Statewide Trails Inventory that includes bicycle paths and pedestrian, equestrian, and mountain-bike trails. |

Source: James A. DeLoney, *Nevada's Outdoor Recreation Actions Survey* (unpublished research), Planning and Development Section, Nevada Division of State Parks, 2002.

Issue # 4: Balancing the Protection of Nevada's Natural, Cultural, and Scenic Resources with Users

Issue Statement: Protection of natural, cultural, and scenic resources needs to be put in balance with users. Create opportunities for users to participate in the protection, i.e., as site stewards. Mandate that a majority of fees paid in a recreation area stay in that area for improvements and maintenance. Citizens acknowledge this as an investment and a way to participate in the conservation of these resources.

First, one myth needs to be dispelled to initiate the discussion about balancing the “protection” of natural, cultural, and scenic resources with outdoor recreation use. There is no such thing as a non-consumptive outdoor recreation activity.

Since 1955, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has conducted the **National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation**. The tenth survey conducted in 2001 uses the term “wildlife-watching activities.” Formerly the term was “nonconsumptive wildlife-related recreation” (U.S. Department of the Interior. October 2002).

The terms “consumptive” and “non-consumptive” were used in previous years to distinguish between outdoor recreation activities which consume a resource, such as fish or wildlife when fishing and hunting, and those activities which were supposed not to consume a resource, such as sightseeing or walking. With the recognition that visual,

solitude, and other amenities are important attributes of various recreational experiences, the conclusion was reached that any outdoor recreational activity does consume something in the way of natural, cultural, or scenic resources. The degree of consumption is dependent on the outdoor recreational activity and the outdoor recreationists engaged in the activity. One activity may require more consumption than another activity. One recreationist may consume more resources than another recreationist when engaged in the same activity. Recognition of these attributes of consumption when applied to outdoor recreation resources and use is essential to attempt to reach the proper balance between resources and use.

Thus, the only way to prevent outdoor recreationists from consuming resources is to totally exclude them from an area. With the “open public lands” in Nevada, this is not a viable option. The question then becomes what the “balance” should be between outdoor recreationists and the protection of natural, cultural, and scenic resources. The answer to this question depends on the person to whom the question is addressed. Responses to this issue illustrate the range of opinions on this all-important question. Those who advocate more wilderness areas to eliminate all mechanized vehicles, including bicycles, are on one end of the spectrum. Advocates of this position want to protect the resources in an area by reducing the disturbance caused by human impacts, and they want to protect certain amenities associated with the outdoor recreation activity of their preference. For example, they may prefer hiking with solitude. They may

define solitude as only seeing a limited number of other people in a day of hiking.

On the other end of the spectrum are those who advocate the freedom to travel without restrictions on public lands designated as open areas to participate in the outdoor recreation activity of their choice, such as off-road vehicling. Proponents of this position may prefer to be able to travel across any natural terrain by mechanized means without any restrictions, regardless of the impact to natural resources. The majority of outdoor recreationists lie somewhere in between.

The majority of people in Nevada are supportive of wilderness areas in Nevada. Sixty-seven percent of persons 16 years of age and older either strongly agreed (40%) or somewhat agreed (27%) with the statement "How do you feel about setting aside MORE designated wilderness areas in Nevada?" The question was asked in a 2001 citizens survey conducted by the Nevada Division of State Parks (DeLoney 2001). Some of those who support wilderness designations wrote in on their questionnaire that they did not want vehicular traffic eliminated entirely in wilderness areas. Comments submitted by respondents to the issues identification and ranking process echo the same sentiment.

Nevadans see the "balance" somewhere in between the examples cited above. Citizens supporting the establishment of wilderness areas also support setting aside other public lands to accommodate other types of outdoor recreation use, to include vehicular use. Citizens supporting open areas on public lands to

provide for off-road vehicle activities may also prefer confining vehicular activities to designated roads. Nevada is fortunate to have a public land base sufficient in size and variety to support the multitude of outdoor recreation activities sought by Nevadans and our visitors if people are willing to work together to accomplish that goal. Research conducted to develop this plan strongly suggests that the majority of Nevadans are willing to work cooperatively to develop and maintain the diversity of outdoor recreation opportunities needed to support the diverse outdoor recreation demand.

Some respondents are concerned that "protect" will be used as a means to **lock up or close areas** to certain types of outdoor recreation use. They **oppose this approach**.

- "How does one rationalize using public tax funds to buy "open space" if the space cannot then be "open" for public use? It otherwise amounts to public dollars protecting a view of a limited number of residents who happen to buy property alongside "open space." Open the space to use and users will protect it for themselves." (General Manager, General Improvement District).

Other respondents expressed concern about the **protection of the natural resources**.

- "Use fees to protect resources." (Member, Southern Nevada Land Cruisers).

More respondents see a need to **balance recreational use with resource conservation**. They emphasize that

responsible users are essential to conserve the valuable natural resources that make areas attractive to recreationists.

- “The definition of “balance” is a sensitive one and needs to be carefully addressed. User buy-in to participate in the protection could be achieved in a number of ways. Although fees should generally be made available to the areas that generate them, many less used areas have needs as compelling as other areas but not the available funds. Therefore, the establishment of a Capital Improvements Plan program with public input in the development of the program should occur.” (Member, Nevada Bicycle Advisory Board).

User education is seen as a means to protect natural, cultural, and scenic resources needed for the provision of outdoor recreation opportunities.

- “It is important to educate the public as to the protection of resources and one of the ways of doing that is to allow them to participate in its upkeep and care.” (Author Unknown).

More active law enforcement was cited as a means to protect outdoor recreational resources.

- “We need stronger laws and regulations to help protect these resources. There (are) many willing citizens that would volunteer to participate in this.” (Park Planner, County PARD).

One respondent said, “Funds collected from user fees should go back into that specific recreation area. When users see that they can make a difference to their specific interest, their contributions of money, services and labor will increase.” “Mandating that a majority of fees paid in a recreation area stay in that area for improvements and maintenance” found strong support among the respondents, but not without concern. Respondent’s primary concern seems to be that elected public officials responsible for the appropriation of public funds for public outdoor recreation will reduce the level of appropriations if fees paid by the outdoor recreationists increase revenues.

Residents of Nevada support the use of outdoor recreation fees to fund the operation and maintenance of Nevada State Parks. When asked “What do you think should be the primary source(s) of funding for the operation and maintenance of Nevada State Parks?” (DeLoney 2001), 33% of the respondents said that user fees paid by visitors who use the parks should be the primary source of funding for the operation and maintenance of Nevada State Parks; 12 % said that general tax revenues appropriated by the Nevada state legislature should be the primary source; and 48% of the respondents said that both user fees and general tax revenues should be the primary source of funding for the operation and maintenance of Nevada State Parks.

When respondents to the 2001 citizen’s survey (DeLoney 2001) were asked about their agreement or disagreement with three statements proposing how to raise additional money to fund the capital improvements of Nevada State Parks, almost 72% either strongly or

somewhat agreed that “the State should dedicate a portion of the current sales taxes on recreational and sporting goods, compared to almost 58% who strongly or somewhat agreed that “the State should appropriate additional funds from existing general tax revenues, and 40% strongly or somewhat agreed that “the State should sell publicly financed bonds to be repaid over time.”

When respondents to the 2001 citizen’s survey (DeLoney 2001) were asked to agree or disagree with the statement “Congress should allocate 60% of the Land and Water Conservation Fund money to fund the acquisition and development of outdoor recreation areas and facilities at state and local levels,” almost 82% strongly or somewhat agreed.

While some may insist that outdoor recreationists do not pay for the public opportunities provided for them to enjoy the outdoor activity of their choice, recreationists maintain that taxes they pay on outdoor recreational goods, equipment, and services and fees for recreation opportunities are not used by elected officials to provide public outdoor recreation opportunities. Public support is the strongest for taxes and fees on outdoor recreation goods and services when the revenues generated are funneled back into the provision of outdoor recreation opportunities, to include the conservation of natural resources. If elected officials were to understand and support this concept, it would present an opportunity to raise public revenues needed to meet the demand for public outdoor recreation opportunities. The public is more inclined to support taxes and fees if they can be shown that their financial

contributions are used wisely and effectively by the public providers of outdoor recreation opportunities.

Users understand that they must pay for outdoor recreation goods and services provided by the private sector. They also understand that **someone must pay for public outdoor recreation goods and services**, and the most likely contributors are the recipients of those goods and services.

- “Citizens understand that nothing comes free now. So they understand that their help is needed either financially or by participation.” (Manager, Nevada Division of State Parks).

Respondents identified **concerns and cautions about fees**.

- “These fees should only be implemented if serious and detrimental consequences would arise if nothing were to be done. Local interest groups and user groups can provide money and resources if they are given the opportunity. At the national level, recreation user fees are likely to be offset by decreases in congressional appropriations, causing no net increase in recreation funding. Some members of Congress have explicitly stated that fees should replace general appropriations to pay for trails and other recreation facilities on public lands. Although other members have promised that fees will not offset appropriations, it is very possible that these offsets could occur. Recreation user fees also present a problem for the nation's

poor and middle class.” (Member, The Reno Wheelmen).

Participants emphasized the **importance of keeping fees in the areas** in which they are collected.

- “Most of the fees collected for outdoor recreational use go into government general funds. This fund is mostly used for non-governmental projects, programs, and activities. The public would be more willing to pay current, or higher, fees if they understand and know that the fees would be used for O&M and development of the recreational site or facility.” (Parks Planning Manager, County PARD).

Participants suggested innovative ideas or novel approaches on **how to raise or handle fees**, or how to administer recreation areas and resources.

- “Conservation of Nevada's resources can be capitalized to bring in more tourism dollars by allowing visits to these areas through a plan to protect and enhance the areas, and by using volunteerism and facilities the BLM/USFS/State Parks already have in place. We could learn to utilize these areas more and use the money to help develop other areas for preservation and viewing.” (Private Citizen, Austin).

Federal fee demonstration areas were cited as examples of how to keep fees in the recreation area where they are collected.

- “The federal government has a fee demo program for the BLM and the Forest Service. This concept could

be expanded to Nevada.” (Manager, U.S. Forest Service).

This respondent articulated several **key points about the funding issue** very well.

- “Several state and federal land management agencies have developed site-steward and volunteer programs, and Nevada State Parks has active volunteer organizations in most of their regions. More emphasis needs to be put on the secondary portion of this issue, that is, the mandate to keep monies collected from fees in the parks or recreational areas where they are collected; and the State Legislature needs to be made more aware of the ways other agencies are dealing with funding recreation areas. The federal “Fee Demonstration Program” has established a solution to keeping funding in the areas where monies are collected; Nevada State Parks’ “surcharge account” is a start, although it is a “penny in the bucket” approach.” (Park Interpreter, Nevada Division of State Parks).

Ownership or “buy-in” of a recreational area or site has inherent advantages to protect the resource and increase user’s willingness to pay.

- “People whom are given the feeling of “ownership” (stewardship) are more willing to pay for and maintain “their” opportunities because they do not want to degrade, let alone lose, those opportunities.” (Manager, Tahoe Regional Planning Agency).

Some respondents view **planning, partnerships, coordination, and cooperation** as components of this issue.

- “Agencies need to identify these natural, cultural, and scenic resources and attempt to protect them. Sometimes partnerships can be formed to assist in developing protection coalitions. In other areas maybe additional taxes may have to be secured, similar to the Carson City Open Space Tax.” (Director, City PARD).

Actions to Address Issue # 4

The top ranked action in table 1.4 garnered 34 percent of the weighted scores. Action # 1 recognizes the importance of user groups participating as volunteers. It identifies the use of fees as a tool to maintain or prevent resource degradation. Typically, users willing to pay fees for the use of a park or recreation area are much less apt to degrade the area than those unwilling to pay a fee. Cases have been cited where increased camping fees at a public park decreased maintenance problems by as much as 90%.

Action # 1 suggests spending the majority of fees to maintain and operate the area where they are collected. It recognizes that some areas will not generate sufficient revenues to administer the area; therefore, a limited amount of fees collected are proposed to support a general fund to provide funds for these areas.

Action # 2 recommends the creation and implementation of a public education campaign as a means to inform recreationists how to recreate while

taking care of the resources that provide the recreation attraction. Informed recreationists are better equipped to access recreational areas with reduced negative impacts on the resources and facilities.

Action # 3 comes to grips with the reality of user fees. Historically, user fees generate insufficient revenues to acquire, develop, and maintain public outdoor recreation parks and areas. Significant recreational resources, such as historic sites and unique natural areas, have enough value to the public to justify funding from general revenues. Funds to acquire and develop these properties for conservation purposes and public use most often come from the general treasury. User fees are rarely sufficient to fund the cost of acquisitions, development, and major renovations. User fees are appropriate to fund the majority of costs necessary to operate and maintain an area for public outdoor recreation use.

Action # 4 recommends providing funding and assistance to non-profits to increase their utility in fundraising and education of users and visitors. Care would have to be taken to insure that the returns for funding and other types of assistance to non-profits are sufficient to justify the investments. Action # 5 notes the sufficiency of the actions stated in the issue itself.

Action # 6 encompasses a rather broad range of recommendations. First, it notes that issue # 4 is the most doable of the eight issues. Issue # 4 is seen as a means to move further from the dependency on general funds into a more self-sufficient role. The value of the approach expressed in the issue

statement is recognized as a valuable marketing tool. The action concludes by expressing the need for a “comprehensive proposal along this line” for submission to the state legislature at the earliest feasible time.

Implementation of the six actions in table 1.4 would go a long way to conserve our natural, cultural, and scenic

resources while balancing conservation with the use of these resources. Insuring that the majority of fees go to improve and maintain the site where the fees are collected, and setting aside a portion of fees from the more profitable sites to care for the sites less capable of generating revenues, is a balanced approach to funding requirements.

| <p>Table 1.4</p> <p>Actions to Address Issue # 4: Balancing the Protection of Nevada’s Natural, Cultural, and Scenic Resources with Users</p> | |
|---|---|
| Rank | Action |
| 1 | Encourage user groups to participate on a volunteer basis and implement use fees when necessary to maintain or prevent resource degradation. Retain the majority of fees in the area where they are collected, but establish a general fund to help areas that need help but do not generate enough to cover determined needs. |
| 2 | Create and implement a public education campaign that includes trail markers indicating natural and cultural resources. Develop brochures and radio/TV spots that encourage people to "Take Pride in Your Backyard" which would highlight areas where resources are being protected but that also have public access; show the role of the public in protecting Nevada's resources for our enjoyment. |
| 3 | Dedicate a tax and/or more general funds to address this issue. Both are essential because except for limited sites, fees will not provide the needed funds. |
| 4 | Provide funding and assistance to non-profits who can help organize maintenance, do fundraising for improvement and educate users and visitors about natural, cultural, and scientific resources conservation. |
| 5 | Looks like the action to take. (Refers to the issue statement: “Protection of natural, cultural, and scenic resources needs to be put in balance with users. Create opportunities for users to participate in the protection, i.e., as site stewards. Mandate that a majority of fees paid in a recreation area stay in that area for improvements and maintenance. Citizens acknowledge this as an investment and a way to participate in the conservation of these resources.”) |
| 6 | Perhaps this issue is the most "doable" proposal. (Refers to the issue statement—see action # 5 above). It would help to remove us further from the general fund and into a more self-sufficient role. It would also give us a marketing tool, par excellence. We lack only the legislative authority to implement it. A comprehensive proposal along this line should be word smithed and presented to the legislature at the earliest feasible time. |

Source: James A. DeLoney, *Nevada’s Outdoor Recreation Actions Survey* (unpublished research), Planning and Development Section, Nevada Division of State Parks, 2002.

Issue # 5: Protecting Water Resources as Vital Components of Nevada's Recreational Base

Issue Statement: Water resources must be protected to maintain the needed quantity, quality, and accessibility for public recreation. Recreation and wildlife depend on the limited water resources in Nevada.

Participants in the issues and actions surveys clearly recognize a couple of essential facts. One, Nevada is the driest state in the United States, and two, conservation of water resources for multiple use is of paramount importance. Some participants questioned whether or not it is even possible to continue the population growth experienced in Nevada for many more years and provide water for wildlife, agriculture, recreation, and other uses in a state where the water supply is so limited.

Outdoor recreational activities such as boating, fishing, water skiing, ice fishing, waterfowl hunting, and sailing occur on water. Water is essential for other outdoor recreational opportunities, such as hunting, observing wildlife, nature study, etc. Other activities are enhanced by the availability of water, such as walking, hiking, camping, and picnicking. Recreational use of water resources often competes with other uses, such as water for human consumption and agricultural use.

Providing adequate water to sustain outdoor recreation and the rapid population growth is complicated by factors such as large herds of non-native wild horses roaming the public lands in Nevada. According to the Nevada

Natural Resources Status Report, over 22,000 wild horses were estimated to range in Nevada in 2001. Over 81,000 wild horses were removed from BLM lands between 1964-2001 (Skudlarek 2002). Herds can double in number every 4-5 years. Since populations increase quickly, the health of the environment may be adversely impacted. Wild horses share forage and water on the public rangelands with wildlife. Without management, wild horse populations will dramatically increase, overgrazing will occur, and result in damage to rangelands (Lewis 2001). While wild horses compete with other wildlife for scarce water resources, particularly during droughts which are common in Nevada, they are a valuable outdoor recreation resource. Viewing wild horses is a popular outdoor recreational activity in Nevada.

One issue discussed at the Nevada Land Use Summit 2002 was titled "Water Rights, Transfer, Change of Use." A summary of the major findings by Farman (2002) provides insights into the issues to be addressed if water resources are to be conserved to maintain the needed quantity, quality, and accessibility for public recreation. Municipal and agricultural uses of water compete for water required to sustain resources needed to support outdoor recreational activities. Extracts from the report illustrate concerns expressed by participants (229 people attended, including representatives from agriculture) in the Summit.

"At issue is the balance between municipal/industrial and other public water uses, such as for agriculture. Long term, ongoing discussion and

interaction between all stakeholders are necessary.”

“Stakeholders need to understand analytical and technical water science. Appropriation and conservation should be tied to macro (statewide) and micro (watershed level) water plans. Total integration and improvement of federal, state and local water plans is needed to provide better quality water plans. Total integration and improvement of federal, state and local water plans is needed to provide better quality water data, common water term definitions, more accurate resource models, better water conservation, and common-sense decisions for sustainable use of water resources. There is a need for a simple, easily understood, statewide consistent environmental impact and disclosure process for better evaluation of water allocation decisions, conservation practices and use. Surface and groundwater resources are stretched to the “max” and many surface waters, such as the Walker River, may be over allocated resulting in resource conflicts. Long term problem solving skills and local master water plans need development.”

“Water issues range from local to regional levels. The “use it or lose it” water use and consumption process creates roadblocks to workable conservation incentives and/or reallocation of use.”

“Issues of controversy, such as maintaining in-stream flow, compulsory urban xeriscape, water right speculation, political and

economic impact of rising water rates, frivolous application protests and private property rights were some areas identified as issues of social concern.” (Licht, editor. 2002).

Section 3—Resource Conservation and Recreational Uses, **Nevada State Water Plan Part 3—Water Planning and Management Issues** (March 1999) lists seven issues in addressing the use of water for recreational purposes. These issues are quoted below.

- “Maintenance of recreational values is an issue considered in the state water plan because recreation is an important beneficial use of the state’s water resources. Recreationists today expect a diverse range of recreation choices in a variety of settings. Maintenance of recreation values depends upon a balance between developing facilities to accommodate a diversity of recreation types while protecting the quality and quantity of aquatic systems and natural resources from overuse for present and future generations.”
- “With increased recreation, there is growing public interest in enhancing and maintaining stream flows, reservoir and lake levels, good water quality conditions, high quality riparian zones and wetlands for fish and wildlife habitat, and public access to waters and adjacent land. However, major rivers in Nevada are fully allocated and during droughts recreation resources are negatively impacted. During the prolonged drought of the late 1980’s through early 90’s, many boating access points at lakes and reservoirs were

- unusable; fish and wildlife habitat deteriorated and populations declined; perennially flowing segments of major rivers went dry; water quality declined; and overall water-based recreational opportunities were fewer. It is likely that more innovative water allocation approaches will be needed to sustain water-based recreation values in the face of growing recreation demand, fully allocated rivers, and recurring droughts.”
- “Nevada’s urban areas are expanding. In some areas, development of private land abutting public land results in loss of access to recreational waters. Increased cooperation between federal, state, and local land use planning agencies could avoid mitigate access issues.”
 - “While the public’s demand for water-based recreation has grown, the cost of agency operations per user has increased and federal funding for recreation has dwindled (e.g., Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund awards to Nevada fell from \$3.2 million in 1979 to zero in 1995) (\$1.12 million in 2003). Funding is inadequate to maintain existing water based recreation sites and amenities. New funding strategies are warranted.”
 - “Conflicts occur between recreationists and other water resource users using the same water body for different purposes. For example, new diversion dams or weirs that extend the full width of river channels can impact navigability, limit fish passage and create safety hazards. Agencies reviewing project proposals to modify existing or construct new structures, as well as other land use activities in water bodies and shore zones, have become increasingly cognizant of the need to take changing recreation needs and values into consideration.”
 - “The type and intensity of recreation activities affects waters with unique or sensitive resource values, such as habitat of protected animal and plant species, archaeological and historical features, and waters with unique or outstanding resource values. An example is the effect that increasing personal watercraft use has on water quality. Recreation has been managed by state and federal agencies to avoid or minimize those effects, however increasing recreational activity could present the need for more monitoring to ensure unique or sensitive resources are adequately protected.”
 - “Most of Nevada’s outdoor recreation occurs on and around waters managed by state and federal agencies. Finding opportunities to increase coordination between agencies could enhance recreation planning and management. Collection of recreation data (e.g., visitor days, forms of recreation, and recreation values) is one example where agency cooperation could be mutually beneficial in terms of sharing and reducing cost, improving data consistency and reliability, and assisting in making better informed recreation resource management decisions.”
- Given the competition for the scarce water resources in Nevada, the question becomes how will scarce water resources in an arid, desert climate be conserved to provide the quality, quantity, and accessibility for outdoor

recreation. Various perspectives on Issue # 5 are offered below using descriptions of the issue provided by participants in the issues identification and prioritization survey conducted in 2001 by the Nevada Division of State Parks.

One long time resident of Nevada saw the need for **better water conservation**.

- “Water resources in Nevada are at a premium. Water should be managed to protect fish/wildlife, visitor use, and noxious weed control. I have lived in central Nevada for 27 years. I must say that for a state that has so little surface water, you would think that the use and care of that resource would be much better.” (Outdoor Recreation Planner/Wilderness Specialist, BLM).

One respondent summed up the **difficulty of dealing with the water issue** this way.

- “This could be the toughest of all problems facing Nevada. Water resources are vital. They will become scarce. The demands will grow exponentially.” (Private Citizen, Incline Village).

Comments by various respondents may be used to describe the situation of **the water issue**.

- “As the population of Nevada increases, so does the demand for water in this arid state. In addition, the demand for water-based recreation facilities and activities (fishing, boating) has also increased. While Lake Mead National Recreation Area is a popular area,

many people prefer to go to cooler areas to fish, boat, camp, and relax during the hot summer months. New facilities are badly needed in the more rural areas of the state, and the needs of wildlife need to be balanced with the increased facilities developed around lakes and streams in rural areas. Many people think only in terms of “hunnable” wildlife (deer, elk, antelope, ducks and birds), but non-game species also depend on the water resources which are quickly disappearing as urban development spreads and springs are tapped or wells are drilled for urban uses.” (Park Interpreter, Nevada Division of State Parks).

When scarce water resources are discussed, concern about **private property rights and the right to engage in water-related outdoor recreation** activities surfaces.

- “Protecting from whom or what? Taking a water resource away from a farmer or rancher who may own such? Wayne Hage comes to mind. Overuse and ABUSE of Endangered Species Act must cease. Humans have rights, too. Let's have responsible, common sense multiple use of the land. Do not put in place exclusionary rules or rules that promote the taking of private property.” (Member, BlueRibbon Coalition).

Respondents view **water resources as the focal point** for the provision of outdoor recreation opportunities in Nevada. Without water resources, recreational pursuits are greatly diminished.

- “Water is a precious resource in Nevada. Water, like trails, needs to be managed to provide the recreational users the resource they desire while protecting the resource and environment. Each individual area needs to be considered with overall goals in mind, then considered in its local context.” (Member, The Reno Wheelmen).

Several respondents commented on the need to **balance** outdoor recreational **uses of water** with other competing uses, such as wildlife.

- “As with the other issues described herein, the key to the success will be a balanced perspective on the importance of water resources for recreation and wildlife as compared to other necessary uses of water. The approach should be sustainable.” (Member, Nevada Bicycle Advisory Board).

There were those respondents who remarked that **wildlife and other uses of water** should be a **higher priority** than outdoor recreation.

- “Wildlife should be # 1 for water use. People need to learn that camping, etc. near water is to be avoided at all cost—fines!” (Member, Southern Nevada Land Cruisers).

As in most outdoor recreation issues, respondents stress the **importance of education** as a means to address the issue.

- “More education is needed on how our waters are allocated to help people better understand the "drain"

that agriculture has on our watersheds. Growing water-intensive crops like alfalfa, and raising non-native livestock, is placing our watersheds in a very untenable condition. Providing incentives to change crops, sell water rights, and reduce water waste (meters) is needed.” (Specialist, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Nevada State Office).

Respondents submitted numerous ways on **how to conserve water resources** in Nevada if the demands for this scarce resource are to be met.

- “Money must be found to help irrigators change to crops that are C-Y plants that use less water. Our water is dedicated over 100% in many areas to irrigators. Money must be found to buy back water rights from willing sellers with that water going to wildlife and recreation.” (Member, Nevada Wildlife Federation).

Ways suggested to conserve the scarce water resources in Nevada include **better planning, coordination, cooperation, and partnerships.**

- “Water resources for all users is a critical issue for our area and it is increasingly important for the community to have the expertise to understand and work with all aspects of water resources. As concerns over water use within and potentially exported outside our boundaries increase, it is important to retain a focus on the need to sustain our environmental quality to protect the resources important to wildlife, recreation, and quality of life and

recognize them as beneficial uses of our water resources.” (Coordinator, County Economic Council).

Opinions among respondents differ on the **amount of control** the government should have over the control of water resources versus the control that should be left to the private sector, particularly on private property.

- “This state needs to make a commitment to providing, protecting, and conserving water resources for all life. If left to private interests, these interests will dispose of water to enhance their own interests, which rarely coincide with the public and resource/wildlife interests. Parks can provide leadership and management coordination and acquisition.” (Member, Trail Association).

Respondents stressed the **importance of water** in various ways.

- “Nevada has the least of amount of rain. Water resources must be protected, especially spring and riparian areas. Also solutions must be found to protect Walker Lake to maintain or improve its water level and water quality.” (Member, Red Rock Audubon Society).

Decisions to allocate and conserve water resources should be **based on good science**, according to responses received.

- “Protection” must be based on good science, not hype and exaggerations. Water is vital to Nevada, but shouldn’t unnecessarily limit recreation.” (Member, BlueRibbon Coalition).

Actions to Address Issue # 5

Water issues in Nevada are extremely complex. Participants in the public process to identify actions for this issue were not experts in water law. Using comments from the Nevada Division of Water Resources, the actions presented in table 1.5 were edited by the Nevada Division of State Parks staff to attempt to align the actions more consistently with existing federal and state laws.

Actions suggested to address issue # 1 are listed in table 1.5. Action # 1 stresses the importance of continuing education to insure that state agencies, counties, cities, and others to protect water resources for recreation and other beneficial uses. With federal agencies responsible for the administration of 87% of the land in Nevada, “others” must include federal agencies. The action stresses the need for “proper legislation and planning.”

Action # 2 emphasizes working with local governments and water districts on water reclamation projects. This action should be pursued to the extent possible and coordinated with action # 6.

Action # 3 stresses the importance of continuing to give water resources for wildlife, recreation, and environmental uses equal status with agriculture and other industries, including uses of water for urban growth, in the determination of potential beneficial uses for appropriations of water resources. NRS 353.030 (2) states “The use of water, from any stream system as provided in this chapter and from underground water as provided in NRS 534.080, for any recreational purpose, is hereby declared to be beneficial use.” NRS 533.367

states “Before a person may obtain a right to the use of water from a spring or water which has seeped to the surface of the ground, he must ensure that wildlife which customarily uses the water will have access to it.” In effect, wildlife, environmental, and the recreational use of water do receive equal status. The difficulty is that most surface waters are already fully appropriated for use. Action # 3 cannot be implemented without the purchase of existing water rights.

Action # 4 recommends identifying and mapping water resources for recreation purposes, and including this issue in the “public process” to develop the statewide trails plan. The Nevada Division of State Parks is responsible for the development of Nevada’s State Trails Plan. Development of Nevada’s State Trails Plan will be staffed by the Recreation Trails Program Manager under the direction of the Park and Recreation Program Manager, Nevada Division of State Parks.

Action # 5 recommends the development of minimum in-stream flows. It then suggests the purchase of water rights to

maintain water levels in streams, rivers, and lakes for quality water resources and recreational activities. This action provides a concrete example of an action that is achievable within the water law. By surveying the state’s water resources, potential uses for each water resource could be identified and minimum flows and storage levels could be established for various recreational uses. Work could then begin to acquire water rights from willing sellers and work with various agencies to manage flows for improved outdoor recreation opportunities.

Action # 6 implies that water needed for consumptive and environmental needs should be given a higher priority than the needs of water for recreational purposes. As explained above, under current water law in Nevada, this is not possible.

Water rights issues are complex and have been a major issue since statehood. Although water allocation is critical to recreation and wildlife, allocations can only be done with the purchase of existing water rights.

Table 1.5
Actions to Address Issue # 5: Protecting Water Resources as
Vital Components of Nevada's Recreational Base

| Rank | Action |
|-------------|--|
| 1 | Conduct continuing education to insure that state agencies, counties, cities, and others realize that water in the state is a precious resource and must be protected for development, recreation, and wildlife through proper legislation and planning. |
| 2 | Work with local units of government and water districts to identify and develop effective water reclamation opportunities and activities. |
| 3 | Continue to give wildlife, environmental, and recreation use of waters equal status with agriculture and other industries (including urban growth) in determining potential beneficial use for appropriations of water resources. |
| 4 | Identify and map water resources used for recreational purposes, and include this issue as part of the public process in the development of the statewide trails plan (currently under development by the NDSP staff). |
| 5 | Develop minimum in-stream flows. Purchase and acquire water rights to maintain minimum water levels in streams, rivers, and lakes to provide for quality water resources and recreational activities. |
| 6 | Balance the development of new recreation opportunities that require water carefully with other competing needs for water. Give the consumptive and environmental needs for water priority over recreational needs for water. |

Source: James A. DeLoney, *Nevada's Outdoor Recreation Actions Survey* (unpublished research), Planning and Development Section, Nevada Division of State Parks, 2002.

Issue # 6: Interpretation and Education of Outdoor Recreation Opportunities

Issue Statement: Encourage, fund, and provide environmental, cultural, and heritage interpretation and educational programs and opportunities, especially outdoor opportunities, throughout Nevada.

Respondents offered numerous suggestions for actions to address issue # 6, interpretation and education for outdoor recreation opportunities, in their comments to describe the issue. Actions taken to address the issue should be preceded by the development of a plan. Like the other seven issues, the need for adequate funding will determine the efforts to address the issue. Educating youth received the most attention in the comments received. Educating the general population also received due emphasis. The education theme surfaced in other issues.

Various elements of **planning** can be gleaned from comments put forward by several respondents. Planning to provide greater accessibility for those with impairments will enable these visitors to outdoor recreation parks and areas to make family plans for a more enjoyable experience.

- “Accessible in different formats. Tactile experiences for people with visual impairments. Interpretive information can provide accessibility information that allows families to make safer choices about where to go and when.” (Employee, Beneficial Design).

Various perspectives were offered on potential **sources and means to fund actions** to address the interpretation and education issue.

- “The issues here are money and vandalism. Some are reluctant to put up signs, etc. for interpretation and locations because they say they will just get vandalized. I think we just have to accept a certain amount of that and do the best we can with education and a moderate amount of law enforcement to prevent it. Road and trail signs are very important so people can know where to go plus there is a safety aspect. If people are available to organize it, volunteer activity can help a lot in with both interpretation and education.” (Member, Joint RAC NCA Subgroup).

Coordination of educational programs among governmental agencies and non-profit groups is important if these efforts are to be effective.

- “Many state and federal agencies have a role in providing environmental, cultural, and heritage opportunities. Better coordination between agencies needs to be conducted to avoid duplication of efforts.” (Program Manager, Nevada Department of Transportation).

Respondents see the **education of our youth** as an essential element in the education efforts. With the vast majority of Nevada’s population residing in urban areas, our youth is growing up in the urban environment. Although Nevada is

sparsely populated compared to the entire United States, 18.2 persons per square mile compared to 79.6 respectively in the year 2000 (Census Bureau. May 7, 2003), the majority of the people in Nevada reside in urban areas. According to the 2000 Census, 94 percent of Nevada's population in 2000 resided in urban areas and 6 percent in rural areas (FHWA August 14, 2002). Our youth need constructive education on natural resources and places where they can visit rural environments.

- “Do more than what is being done now. Education should start at the grade school level and continue through college. On-site interpretation and education should be realistic. How is the land being used, what are the effects, what lives there, what does water do, what animals depend on what sources for food and water, etc.” (County Trails Coordinator).

Respondents frequently cited the importance of **educating the general populace**, to include those moving into the state, about the state's natural resources and outdoor recreation activities. Stewardship is also important.

- “People need to be aware of what Nevada has to offer. Most people only think of Las Vegas or Reno when you mention Nevada and we need to make them more aware of what we have to offer besides gambling!” (Private Citizen, Austin).

Convention and Visitors Authority and the Nevada Commission on Tourism were suggested as resources to **market interpretation and education**

programs, to include visitor information on the vast outdoor recreation natural resource base in Nevada.

- “All of these efforts require literature, staff, or volunteer time, etc. You also need to properly market these programs and opportunities. If you don't, then none will come. This again requires working with your local Convention and Visitors Authority and the Nevada Commission on Tourism.” (Executive Director, Convention and Visitors Authority).

Respondents specifically cited the need to **encourage environmental education**.

- “Fine. Let's educate the public on Tread Lightly! Get the message to the children in the schools, especially the high schools, on how to properly conduct oneself and one's vehicle on the public lands.” (Member, Blue Ribbon Coalition).

Land management agencies could do more in Nevada **to educate and inform the public and recreationists**. One federal agency representative noted that the Bureau of Land Management lands in Nevada are a “great—mostly untapped—recreational resource.” Suggestions addressing the outdoor recreation issues cited in this plan show that the participants in the public input process have given a lot of excellent thought to planning and management ideas applicable to the land management agencies in Nevada.

- “The major land managers of the state need to concentrate on the management of the resources they

are in charge of. They should provide as much information as possible so that the recreational users are aware of the resources they are using and any restrictions and or laws that are applicable to them and the area of use.” (Member, The Reno Wheelmen).

Actions to Address Issue # 6

Issue # 6, interpretation and education for outdoor recreation opportunities, is the only issue of the eight issues that resulted in ten actions to address the issue. The reason for ten actions is because the weighted scores for actions ranked 8 through 10 tied with scores of 35 each, the lowest weighted scores of any of the actions presented in this plan. The combined weighted score of 715 for the actions recommended to address issue # 6 is the lowest weighted score of the actions scored by the participants to address any of the eight issues presented in this plan. Ranges of the weighted scores for the other seven issues ranged from 936 to 1,491. The significance of this analysis is that the actions recommended to address this issue were awarded the lowest weighted scores in the actions identification and ranking process. Although one issue may rank higher than another issue, the actions to address an issue may be lower than actions to address an issue ranked lower. Thus, weighted scores to rank actions are not necessarily congruent with the weighted scores to rank issues.

The top ranked action to address this issue had the lowest weighted score of

the top ranked actions to address the eight issues. It’s almost as if the respondent’s weighting of the actions to address the interpretation and education issue confirmed one of their own concerns—the lack of funding and emphasis placed on education and interpretation. If those concerned about the lack of funding and emphasis to address education and interpretation rank the actions far below the actions ranked to address the other seven issues, does this mean that it will be the most difficult to implement actions to address this issue? Or does it simply mean that education and interpretation is easily recognized as an important issue in itself and as an integral part of most of the other issues, but it may be the most difficult to produce actions that we can come to grips with, or implement? If this is the case, then planning how to develop and implement actions may be the essential and all-important first step. One comment received may capture this thought best.

- “This is what I’m interested in. In the last 40 years, I have seen parts of our area being destroyed for the sake of preservation. I hope to one day do tours from an heritage point of view.” (Member, Joint RAC NCA Subgroup).

The sincere interest is there for action to be taken. Forty years is long enough. It’s time for action! One day should be today or the near future at the latest, not another 40 years.

| <p style="text-align: center;">Table 1.6</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Actions to Address Issue # 6: Interpretation and Education of Outdoor Recreation Opportunities</p> | |
|--|--|
| Rank | Action |
| 1 | Make a needs and wants list that both public and private interest groups could work towards. Host a statewide recreational summit and make this information available to organizations, volunteer programs, and agencies for those interested in pursuing these projects. |
| 2 | Develop a public education campaign to educate the public on the importance of this issue and to raise private dollars for resource protection. Form a Resource Coalition with all the environmental groups: Nature Conservancy, Sierra Club, Ducks Limited, etc. to get them to work together on common goals of education and fundraising. |
| 3 | Have agencies work with the local media (television, radio, print such as newspapers and magazines) to provide more environmental education information to the public. Present information that appeals to and educates the public as to the appropriate behaviors and uses of their public parks and lands. |
| 4 | Establish and fund a state recreational educational program within the Division of State Parks. |
| 5 | Provide information kiosks at major recreation areas that help inform the public of what is available to do in that area. |
| 6 | Work with public land managers and school officials on a statewide education curriculum for all Nevada students regarding the natural and cultural heritage of the Great Basin. |
| 7 | Acquire funds to create a permanent position to direct these activities, including program development, advertising, implementation, and follow-up. |
| 8 | Go for a state sales tax increase, instead of a statewide bond issue, to establish a dependable revenue source. |
| 9 | This is a highly do-able issue except for the funding part. Work within the framework of our regional agencies to coordinate a statewide program with relatively minor expense. We are merely constrained by the need for direction. |
| 10 | Mandate that the Development Plans for all State Parks include either an environmental, cultural, or historic educational element. |

Source: James A. DeLoney, *Nevada's Outdoor Recreation Actions Survey* (unpublished research), Planning and Development Section, Nevada Division of State Parks, 2002.

Issue # 7: Nevada's Growing Population Places Increasing Demand on Outdoor Recreation Resources and Suppliers

Issue Statement: Nevada's growing population is placing an increasing demand on recreation resources and recreation suppliers at all levels, statewide. New resources need to be identified, acquired, funded, and developed.

The first sentence of issue # 7 is identical in wording to issue # 6 cited in the **1992 SCORP** (1992 SCORP, page 4-12). The sentence "New resources need to be identified, acquired, funded, and developed" was added to the issue statement in the **2003 SCORP**. The rankings of the issue in the 1992 and 2003 plan are almost identical. Thus, this issue remains virtually unchanged over ten years.

The rapid population growth in Nevada continues, and future predictions estimate the state's population to reach 2.6 million by the year 2010, an increase of about 14% over the 2003 population (Hardcastle 2000). Nevada's population grew from 1.2 million in 1990 to 2.0 million in 2000, an increase of 800,000, or 66%. On an average, the population in Nevada increased 6,600 per month over the ten-year period (Census Bureau, 1990 and 2000 Censuses of Population, and county estimate files).

Of the 17 counties in Nevada, 13 experienced population increases during the ten years from 1990 to 2000 while the remaining four counties registered population declines. Clark County (Las Vegas area) was the fastest growing

county based on percentage increase in population and total number of people. Clark County's population grew from 741,368 to 1,375,765, an increase of 634,397 or over 85%, during the ten-year span.

Clark County's population grew at an average monthly rate of 5,286 people per month for ten years. Placed in perspective with the other counties in Nevada, Clark County's growth in one month exceeds the 2000 population in each of five counties in Nevada—Esmeralda, Eureka, Lincoln, Mineral, and Storey. The growth in Clark County in two months would exceed the population in each of another three counties—Lander, Pershing, and White Pine. Thus, every two months the current population growth in Clark County will surpass the 2000 population in each of half the counties in Nevada. In twelve months, Clark County's population growth will exceed the populations in 15 of the 16 remaining counties, with Washoe County being the exception.

By comparison, Washoe County registered the second largest growth in the number of people in the Nevada counties, growing in population from 254,667 in 1990 to 339,386 in the year 2000, an increase of 84,819 or 33%. During the same ten years, populations declined by almost 28% in Esmeralda County, by almost 22% in Mineral County, by over 7% in Lander County, and by almost 1% in White Pine County. (Census Bureau, 1990 and 2000 Censuses of Population, and county estimate files). According to the same source, 12.5% of the population in

Nevada lived in non-metro counties in 2000.

Eighty-four percent of the respondents to the 2001 citizen's survey on outdoor recreation conducted by the Nevada Division of State Parks said that they participated in an outdoor recreation activity in the year 2000 (DeLoney 2001). This statistic coupled with the phenomenal population growth of 6,600 per month from 1990-2000 substantiates the issue statement for issue # 7. Conservatively, an estimated 5,500 (6,600 X 84%) new recreationists moved into Nevada every month, or 660,000 over the ten year period! "Nevada's growing population is placing an increased demand on recreation resources and recreation suppliers at all levels, statewide." New resources need to be identified, acquired, and developed.

Respondents are well aware of the **correlation between population increases and increases in outdoor recreation**.

- "Population growth has had a statewide impact on recreational resources and facilities. New resources and recreational opportunities need to be identified and implemented. One suggestion would be to pursue the development of a statewide pathway/trail loop that would link regions of the state (Clark County, Washoe County, Interstate 80, Highway 93, 95 corridors). Recreational opportunity would be increased dramatically for residents as well as visitors; length of stay would be increased; populations, user groups and use of facilities would be dispersed." (City Planner).

Respondents separated outdoor recreation demand and corresponding needs generated by the population and out-of-state visitors into urban and rural categories. The majority of outdoor recreation participation in Nevada is generated in the highly populated urban counties discussed above. Urban type outdoor recreation activities occur in those urban areas. Examples are softball, baseball, pool swimming, walking, etc. Other types of outdoor recreation, such as camping, hiking, fishing, etc., are dependent on a natural resource base. The demand for these activities may be generated in the large urban areas but the participation occurs on a "destination basis," i.e., in the rural areas. Comments received below illustrate the **urban-rural dichotomy**.

Urban areas:

- "Outdoor recreation (participation) currently exceeds carrying capacity at most recreational areas in proximity to urban areas. There is a public need for additional recreational sites closer to urban centers where use is greatest." (Parks Planning Manager, County PARD).

Rural areas:

- "But the areas where the population is expanding are not the areas where the recreation sources are likely to be located. That burden falls on those rural counties surrounding Clark, Washoe, and Elko Counties. The rurals would have to be funded by the areas of increased population which drive the new demand." (City Director, Community Development).

Meeting the increasing outdoor recreation demand will require **planning**, particularly with the funding shortfalls and lower priorities placed on recreation compared to other social needs, such as education, law enforcement, health, etc.

- “A resource inventory should be performed with an associated cost of improvement required to meet increasing demands so appropriate funding levels can be acquired/generated.” (Manager, County Road Operations and Maintenance).

The increasing number of outdoor recreationists may also **change the types of interests recreationists pursue**.

- “Even in rural central Nevada, recreation use is shifting from the old traditional uses of hunting, fishing, and camping to OHV's, rock climbing, dune buggies, and etc. More and more visitor use is changing from local to urban visitors and they expect recreation enhancements, toilets, developed and maintained campsites, trails, signage, brochures, site interpretation, etc. Without funding, planning, reduced impacts to resources, and staffing to meet these challenges, Nevada will not be able to meet the future recreation demands.” (Outdoor Recreation Planner/Wilderness Specialist, BLM).

Proper **care of existing parks** is preferred over the acquisition of new parks by some participants. Reasons for this may be to take care of what you already have before you acquire and

develop new parks. Another reason is that there are those who see increased outdoor recreational development and use as a threat to the environment.

- “While it is true about the increased population, it is also true that maintaining existing recreation resources is far more important than finding new resources. I say this only because we are losing resources at an alarming rate. Attempting to find new resources only reduces the funds and efforts available to maintain existing resource. The probability of finding and opening new recreational opportunity would surely meet with a great resistance from those dedicated to closure.” (Member, BlueRibbon Coalition).

Rapid development in the state requires **actions to be taken** if outdoor recreation needs are to be met.

- “We are allowing/encouraging development in Vegas at all costs, restricting use of public land in surrounding rural towns as the exchange, and then watching as urban residents misuse outlying public land, shutting down its use by all, even those living in the rural areas. Education and expanded use need to be the answers before restricting access.” (Rural Towns Manager).

Meeting the increasing outdoor recreation demand will require **ample funding**.

- “The state should be looking at ways to generate revenue from businesses, users, and tourism to support the costs of providing

recreational opportunities. We all should contribute in one way or another to supporting public lands/wildlife and landscape functions.” (Member, Truckee Meadows Trails Association).

Some respondents saw the need for the **development of outdoor recreation resources**. Not all necessarily see the need for new acquisitions.

- “In many areas, resources such as water are available, but access (roads) is limited.” (Member, Las Vegas Good Sams).

Actions to Address Issue # 7

Total weighted scores for issue # 7 are greater than the weighted scores for two higher ranked issues, # 3 and # 6. The top four actions listed in table 1.7 accounted for almost 59% of the total weighted action scores for this issue.

Action # 1 recognizes funding at all levels of government to find a reliable source of dollars. Action # 2 gets back to the idea of taking care of what we have, and then making additions by priority of need and funding available. Action # 3 suggests a special tax on recreation equipment purchases and

dedicating the tax revenues to provide outdoor recreational opportunities for the recreationists. Action # 3 also suggests that the state and federal governments work more closely with each other and have some of the money help improve facilities in Southern Nevada. It concludes by emphasizing that all groups and agencies work together.

Action # 4 keys on the preservation of areas near urban areas as recreation and open space to meet the mixed recreational uses. It cautions about the restrictions imposed by wilderness designations. Cooperative agreements between federal and local governments to support recreation and open space areas are suggested.

Action # 5 reveals the need to work with the state legislature to develop a “recreational use tax” on recreational equipment sales and rentals, using proceeds to build and maintain recreational facilities. The last two actions # 6 and # 7, address planning required to tackle the issue. First, survey the public users to determine outdoor recreation needs, and then put these needs in a viable outdoor recreation plan. The **2003 SCORP** accomplishes both of these suggestions.

Table 1.7
**Actions to Address Issue # 7: Nevada's Growing
Population Places Increasing Demand on Outdoor
Recreation Resources and Suppliers**

| Rank | Action |
|-------------|--|
| 1 | Work at all levels of government to find a reliable source of dollars to support acquisition, development, and maintenance of facilities statewide. Get buy-in from the developers and public. |
| 2 | Take care of what we have first, and then make additions by priority of need and funding available. |
| 3 | Put a special tax on (recreation) equipment purchased, depending on the (recreational) use, and then put the revenues into an account for those types of users. Give the money out to develop recreational areas for each type of recreation use. Another alternative is a program such as the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act (SNPLMA) money. Why can't the state work closer with the federal government and have some of this money help improve state facilities in Southern Nevada? (The federal act does not permit the use of the funds generated from the land sales to be used for Nevada State Parks). Again, we need to work closely with all groups and agencies. |
| 4 | Preserve areas near urbanized areas for mixed recreational uses that could be termed recreation and open space. These areas need not be restricted by wilderness designation. If a federal agency has jurisdiction, develop cooperative management agreements with local governments to support the recreation and open space areas. |
| 5 | Work with state legislature to develop "recreational use tax" on sale or rent of recreational equipment (from baseball gloves to boats) within the state. Proceeds to be used to build and maintain recreational facilities. |
| 6 | Survey public users to find out what their needs include; survey fliers in sporting goods stores and specialty shops, or through selected media lists (e.g., mailings to subscribers of recreation magazines); and the completed surveys should be made available to all agencies participating in this plan. Following completion of the survey, each agency should examine areas within their jurisdiction, for the kinds of needs identified. If potential areas exist to meet the needs expressed, then agencies may pursue funding for development or acquisition within their framework. |
| 7 | Put together a statewide recreation list (a want list—first involving all government agencies and private groups interested). |

Source: James A. DeLoney, *Nevada's Outdoor Recreation Actions Survey* (unpublished research), Planning and Development Section, Nevada Division of State Parks, 2002.

Issue # 8: Coordination and Cooperation Between Recreation Providers

Issue Statement: Coordination and cooperation between public and private recreation providers at all levels is very important. More true support from private citizens, user groups, and governmental entities (local, state, and federal) are important partnerships to pursue.

Participants stressed the need for cooperation and coordination throughout their comments in all eight outdoor recreation issues cited in this plan. Fragmentation among outdoor recreation interests for many years has weakened the outdoor recreation movement. Unfortunately, various outdoor recreation interests are becoming polarized against each other rather than working together to unite for the benefit of all outdoor recreation enthusiasts. This fragmentation and polarization hampers efforts to communicate outdoor recreation needs to elected officials charged to make decisions on budgetary appropriations. Far too often, those with outdoor recreation interests are much too quick to criticize others with outdoor recreation interests different from their own. Our focus becomes too narrow to the detriment of the overall outdoor recreation cause.

Advocates supportive of outdoor recreation are needed at all levels of government in elected offices. The absence of elected officials who understand the importance of outdoor recreation to our society and who advocate the provision of outdoor recreation opportunities to meet outdoor

recreation demand is one of the most formidable barriers to the provision of adequate public outdoor recreation opportunities.

Coordination and cooperation can result in partnerships that are efficient in the provision of outdoor recreation opportunities for the recreating public. Two examples of coordination and cooperation that directly impact the provision of outdoor recreation in Nevada are the Recreational Trails Grant Program administered by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Land and Water Conservation Fund Grants Program administered by the National Park Service (NPS). Both programs provide valuable sources of funding to public outdoor recreation providers in Nevada. Administration of these two grant programs requires coordination and cooperation between federal, state, and local governmental entities. They also require states to develop and maintain state plans to receive and maintain their eligibility to participate in these two federal grants programs. Development of state plans involves extensive coordination and cooperation among numerous governmental and non-governmental entities throughout Nevada, and with private citizens.

There are numerous examples of other efforts of coordination and cooperation geared toward the provision of outdoor recreation opportunities in Nevada. Non-profit entities play a significant role in the provision of outdoor recreation opportunities in Nevada. For example, non-profit entities have successfully applied for the federal RecTrail Grants. Non-profits work with federal, state, and

local governmental entities to complete the trail projects.

The term “**true support**” was stated or implied in these responses.

- “True support” evolves from “true involvement” in both the planning, implementation, and stewarding levels. The South Fork Dam in Elko County stands as an example of a state facility somewhat distanced, in any meaningful measure, from a “partnership” approach.” (Private Citizen, Elko).

Hindrances to improving coordination and cooperation and forming partnerships will have to be removed before actions to address this issue can be fully implemented.

- “Perhaps the most important long term issue to pursue. Too often, the passion and resources lay at the polar ends of a spectrum and the wishes and needs of the majority in the middle go unmet.” (Employee, Zephyr Cove Resort).

Partners in **partnerships** should be aware of the resources required to provide outdoor recreation opportunities.

- “Partnerships are important. However, it is critical that resources are not damaged due to enthusiasm of partners that want their own projects regardless of the sensitivity of the resources. (Member, Audubon Society).

Respondents offered a variety of **tools to improve cooperation** and foster better relationships among various outdoor recreation providers and interest groups.

- “Especially at the front end, where plans are made. Duplicity is as wasteful as ignorance. By building new facilities and access to them through collaboration, more access is available and more citizens served.” (General Manager, General Improvement District).

An agency and a person need to be **designated to take a lead role** to facilitate coordination, cooperation, and partnerships.

- “There needs to be an over-riding advocate for the land, that balances permitting and usage, both public and private. Over-use in any situation needs to be monitored. Restrictions to private users should not be unreasonably withheld. It is by balancing all users that the land will be protected while providing the best recreational experience.” (Director, Tennis and Ski Resort).

Suggestions on how to **involve different entities** dominated a significant number of the comments. These comments are grouped loosely under the following types of entities.

Local groups and citizens:

- “With adequate funding and public notice, and a process to explain the goals, priorities, and objectives would be of great benefit to coordinate, assess, and problem solve recreational issues. Local groups and citizens can be effective in solving and mitigating local issues if they are involved in the process.” (Member, The Reno Wheelmen).

User groups:

- “As a percent of a population, the various user groups are small. The general population really cares little for specific hiking/biking/motorized use areas. Those users do care and work hard for their specific preferred form of recreation. Far more coordination and cooperation among the bikers and motorized users is needed, while the hikers generally should be more tolerant. Everyone needs to be more tolerant of others' recreation form.” (Member, BlueRibbon Coalition).

Private entities:

- “Encouraging or even requiring private participation by developers should be pursued. If you benefit from urban growth, be required to pay for some development of recreational lands beyond the community park (city/county owned).” (Rural Towns Manager).

Volunteer, non-profit, citizen's groups:

- “Need more cooperation between agencies and more use of volunteers. We have a growing number of retired people with a great diversity of skills and knowledge that agencies can use to everyone's benefit.” (Game Warden, Nevada Division of Wildlife).

Governmental entities:

- “Cooperative efforts do not just happen. It takes capable, experienced people to make them work successfully. This usually falls to government agencies at some level. Are they willing to fund the personnel to make these efforts work well?” (Member, Joint RAC NCA Subgroup).

Public/private entities:

- “The BLM and USFS need to work more with the private sector to allow more access to PUBLIC lands. By coordinating with the private sector we could have better and more areas for outdoor recreation.” (Citizen, Austin).

Partnering may serve as a means to institute creative funding. Respondents are very serious about cooperation among all levels of government. They are aware of the lack of cooperation, the duplication of efforts, and the resulting wastes of the taxpayer's money. They expect corrective action forthcoming from all sectors of government.

- “I'm not sure that there's enough communication currently across jurisdictional lines between the state, local, and federal agencies that deal with recreation. One agency can't do it all; coordination is becoming increasingly critical in this time of budgetary challenges at all government levels. The public likes to see smart government practices such as cost sharing and collaboration. User groups and private citizens are an untapped resource in the stewardship and

advocacy arena.” (Executive Director, Conservation Organization).

Actions to Address Issue # 8

Interestingly enough, the total weighted scores of the actions listed issue # 8 exceeded the weighted scores for issue #3, 4, 5, and 6. Only the weighted scores for issues # 1 and 2 were greater than the weighted score for issue # 8. Issue # 8 has nine actions. Actions ranked 8 and 9 tied with a score of 40 points each. Actions 6 and 7 had scores of 50 and 45, respectively. Thus, the weighted scores for the last four actions, ranked 6 through 9, were not significantly different.

Actions # 1 and 2 are very similar. Both suggest partnerships among the different governmental entities and local organizations to work on recreation priorities to improve outdoor recreation opportunities. Action # 3 suggests that a coordinating agency host a website to list contact information and information on events. The coordinating agency would also host an annual statewide summit on outdoor recreation.

Action # 4 recommends the development of a group that represents public, private, and support interests to find common understandings and goals. Action # 5 encourages participation from local conventions and visitor’s authorities to help market various outdoor recreation opportunities, among other things. Action # 6 sees the need for one person dedicated to the development of true support from private citizens, user groups, and governmental entities.

Action # 7 stresses the involvement of all the stakeholders in land use and project planning, including landowners, and the consideration of funding. Action # 8 describes characteristics of partners in partnerships. It says that associations are transitory and that partnerships are no panacea for unilateral action. It states that the non-federal land base in Nevada is insufficient to supply the needs listed in the **2003 SCORP**. It concludes “The only way this plan can become reality is to aggressively acquire what was denied us in our statehood (referring to land).”

Action # 9 is similar to actions # 1 and 2. All three actions address partnerships.

| <p style="text-align: center;">Table 1.8 Actions to Address Issue # 8: Coordination and Cooperation Between Recreation Providers</p> | |
|--|--|
| Rank | Action |
| 1 | Develop partnerships on the local level to bring federal, state, and local entities together to work on specific recreation priorities. |
| 2 | Develop partnerships with local governments (counties), federal agencies, and local organizations to identify and develop local outdoor recreation opportunities. |
| 3 | Have a coordinating agency host a web site (1) that lists all the contact information for the persons, organizations, and governmental agencies involved in recreation; (2) posts information concerning projects, needs, advisories, meetings, events, etc. and/or (3) hosts a statewide recreational summit on an annual basis. |
| 4 | Develop a "Group" that represents all interests (public, private, and support) to find common understandings and goals, and that appreciate uniqueness. Establish partnerships via these meetings. State initial lead—develop private-non-profit entity to continue. |
| 5 | Encourage participation from local conventions and visitors authorities and the Nevada Commission on Tourism. They can help create new events such as the Mining Expo Fishing Derby in Elko at South Fork State Recreation Area. They can also help market the various recreation attractions such as the new "Adventures in the Edge" brochure developed by the Elko Convention and Visitors Authority. |
| 6 | Identify and allocate a person within the State of Nevada to develop true support from private citizens, user groups, and governmental entities. |
| 7 | Insure that all the interests are involved in the decision-making in land use planning and project planning. Landowners and funding sources are very important during planning. |
| 8 | Partnerships are wonderful. They also come and go according to the needs of the partners. At best, such associations are transitory. Partnerships are no panacea for unilateral action. Unilateral actions and programs are the only certain courses of action. Synopsis: We do not have the non-federal land base in this state sufficient to supply the needs outlined in the Outdoor Recreation Plan. The only way this plan can become reality is to aggressively acquire what was denied us in our statehood. It is that simple. |
| 9 | Work to establish partnerships between public and private providers to accommodate public needs and wants. |

Source: James A. DeLoney, *Nevada's Outdoor Recreation Actions Survey* (unpublished research), Planning and Development Section, Nevada Division of State Parks, 2002.